

Frequently Asked Questions

How do I apply for a Special Use Permit?

Print out a Special Use Permit Application from this web-site. For picnics, weddings and other similar events, use the General Application. For taking bridal pictures and still photography, use the Filming Short Form. For film productions, use the Filming Long Form.

Fill out the application with as much information about your event as possible taking care to include the dates, times, and location you are requesting. Mail the application, and a \$75.00 check made out to the National Park Service, to the Special Use Permit Coordinator, Valley Forge National Historical Park, 1400 North Outer Line Drive, King of Prussia, PA 19406-1009.

How much does a Special Use Permit cost?

There is a \$75.00 administrative charge for reviewing your permit application. A check for this amount, made out to the National Park Service, must accompany your application. This administrative charge is non-refundable.

All other fees are calculated on an individual basis. Cost recovery fees will be charged for those events requiring special assistance from park staff, or the use of park resources. Some Special Use Permits for filming will require a location fee to be paid. Permit fees are also financially responsible for any damages to park resources caused by themselves, members of their group, or as a result of their event.

Does a Special Use Permit give me the exclusive right to an area of the park?

No, a Special Use Permit does not give exclusive rights to the permittee or allow the permittee to restrict visitors from any location. The Special Use Permit does insure no other large group or event will be permitted to be in the same area at the same time. Picnic areas are on a first come first use basis. No reservation of tables or “saving” of tables is permitted.

How far ahead of my event should I send the Special Use Permit Application in?

At a minimum, send your application in to the park 30 days prior to your event. If you have all the information about your event, you can send in your application up to one year in advance. The sooner you submit your application, the better the chances are you will get the time and location in the park you are applying for. Allow 30 days for the park to review your application and issue you your Special Use Permit.

Larger events, which require planning on the part of park staff require a lead time in excess of thirty days, depending upon the event.

When do I need to get a permit?

You will need a permit for any event with participation over 50 people. For events fewer than 50 people, a Special Use Permit may be appropriate to insure no other large groups are permitted to be in the same area at the same time.

If special equipment will be used at your event, such as sound equipment, a caterer, barbecue grills, etc., a Special Use Permit will be needed regardless of the size of the group.

Do I need a permit to have wedding pictures taken in the park?

Yes, you will need a permit to have wedding pictures taken in the park. The Special Use Permit will insure another bride, or an event, is not permitted to be in the same area at the same time you are. Please use the Filming Short Form for wedding pictures.

Can I have my pictures taken under the National Memorial Arch?

No, you must stay at least 100 feet away from historic structures and all monuments in the park including the National Memorial Arch.

I want to be married and/or have my wedding pictures taken at the Washington Memorial Chapel.

The Washington Memorial Chapel is not owned by the National Park Service. To have a wedding there, or to have your pictures taken at the National Memorial Chapel, you must contact the Chapel directly at 610-783-0120. The Washington Memorial Chapel is an Episcopal Parish in the Diocese of Pennsylvania. The Chapel receives no government funds and is entirely supported by contributions from members and visitors.

Do I need a permit to hold my wedding ceremony in the park?

Yes, you will need a permit to hold your wedding ceremony in the park regardless of the size of the wedding party.

Do you have any suggestions on where in the park I could get married?

We have a small gazebo up behind the P. C. Knox Estate, on Wilson Road, off Yellow Springs Road. This area offers a quiet place, somewhat off the beaten path, in a lovely location. Parking is along the roadside very near the gazebo. Many brides have chosen this unique location.

Why can't I throw rice, bird seed, or flower petals at my wedding?

Rice, once swallowed by a bird, expands and can harm or even kill. Certain flower petals are slow to rot and the area would need to be raked and the debris disposed of. The cost of removing flower petals from the area will be charged to the permittee.

Seed carries with it the beginnings of invasive plant species. Considerable work has been done within the boundary of Valley Forge National Historical Park to eliminate invasive plant species and we need the public's help to continue to control them.

Bubbles are a wonderful alternate to rice, flower petals, or seed!

Do you have a pavilion?

No, we do not have any pavilions or covered picnic areas in the park.

Do you have barbeque grills?

Yes, in the Betzwood Picnic Area of the park there are grills near the picnic tables.

We want to serve alcohol at our event. Is this permitted?

No, you can not serve alcohol. All areas of the park are closed to the consumption of alcoholic beverages.

Are we allowed to have a camp fire at our event?

No, all ground fires are prohibited. Approved propane or gasoline stoves and charcoal grills can be permitted provided they are used in designated picnic areas. Grills are provided by the Park in the Betzwood Picnic Area for public use.

When is a Special Use Permit Application denied?

The Superintendent may disapprove a request for a Special Use Permit if it is determined that:

- it will conflict with law or policy
- it will be a derogation of the values and purposes for which the park was established
- it is inconsistent with the park's enabling legislation

- it has a reasonable potential to cause illness, personal injury, or property damage
- it will unduly interfere with normal park operations, resource protection, or visitor use
- there is a no meaningful association between the park area and the event
- the observance does not contribute to visitor understanding of the significance of the park
- the event is conducted primarily for the material or financial benefit of participants, involves commercialization, advertising, or publicity by participants, or for which a separate public admission fee is to be charged, unless the event is directly related to the purposes for which a park was established